



State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

Senate Committee on Education
March 6, 2008

Department of Public Instruction Testimony on 2007 Senate Bill 557

Thank you to Chairperson Lehman and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Jennifer Kammerud. I am the legislative liaison for the Department of Public Instruction and am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 557.

The department, in conjunction with the School Administrators Alliance, requested this bill to address concerns related to reimbursements for certain pupil services staff with special education aid. The department would like to thank Sen. Lehman and Rep. Davis for introducing this bill. We believe its passage would result in a significant reduction in paperwork for school districts.

Currently, the salaries and benefits of school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and counselors who work with special education are among the costs eligible for reimbursement through special education aid. The department requires districts to report full time equivalency for the identified positions to determine reimbursement. This information has to be audited so records have to be kept for each of these positions. Records include position descriptions and logs of work done with special education students.

SB 557 would make implementing this reimbursement much easier for school districts by providing the department with the authority to determine the average percentage of work time that each of the personnel categories spends providing services to children with disabilities. The department would then simply use the average percentage to provide reimbursement for salary and fringe benefits of eligible pupil services staff.

The department believes this bill will be beneficial to school districts by reducing the workload involved and streamlining the process for reimbursement.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Date: March 6, 2008

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Tom Wohlleber, Assistant Superintendent
Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District

RE: Senate Bill 557

I am writing on behalf of the Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District and as President of the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials to request your support for Senate Bill 557.

Wisconsin Senate Bill 557 will allow DPI reimbursement to school districts for eligible special education costs incurred for school nurses, social workers, school psychologists and school counselors based on an average per-cent of statewide costs in the above categories. This would mirror the present system of reimbursement for special education costs in all other areas such as teachers, aides and administrators. Presently, school administrators and business officials are required to provide detailed time sheets for only school nurses, social workers, psychologists and counselors in order for the DPI to honor reimbursement of special education aid for these eligible categories.

This process is extremely time consuming and inefficient for school districts' staffs because of the unneeded recordkeeping required and the use of a dual reporting system. The Middleton-Cross Plains Area School District alone has spent in excess of eighty (80) labor hours (teacher, clerical and administrative) to track this information. Passage of this bill will allow us to better utilize our limited resources more efficiently for the prime mission of educating our students.

Your support of Senate Bill 557 greatly appreciated. Time is of the essence as we are currently in the process of developing our school district budget for the next fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008. If you should have any questions regarding how the current process of calculating special education categorical aid impacts school districts, please contact me at (608) 829-9002 or tomw@mcpasd.k12.wi.us. Thank you for your consideration.



School Administrators Alliance

Representing the Interests of Wisconsin School Children

Date: March 6, 2008

To: Senate Committee on Education

From: John Forester, Director of Government Relations and Woody Wiedenhoeft,
Executive Director of the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials

RE: Senate Bill 557

The School Administrators Alliance (SAA) representing the Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services, the Wisconsin Association of School Business Officials, the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators and the Wisconsin Association of District Administrators strongly supports Senate Bill 557.

Wisconsin Senate Bill 557 will allow DPI reimbursement to school districts for eligible special education costs incurred for school nurses, social workers, school psychologists and school counselors based on an average per-cent of statewide costs in the above categories. Presently, school administrators and business officials are required to provide detailed time sheets for only school nurses, social workers, psychologists and counselors in order for the DPI to honor reimbursement of special education aid for these eligible categories.

This process is extremely time consuming and inefficient for school districts' staffs because of the unneeded recordkeeping required and the use of a dual reporting system. This will use the limited resources of state aid and human resources more efficiently for the prime mission of educating our schoolchildren at the local level.

Please join us in supporting Senate Bill ⁵⁵⁷~~906~~. If you should have any questions or require additional information on the SAA's position, please contact either Woody Wiedenhoeft at 608-249-8558, wwiedenhoeft@wasbo.com or John Forester at 608-242-1370, john.forester@wsaa.org. Thank you for your consideration.

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An Alliance of:

Association of Wisconsin
School Administrators

Wisconsin Association of
School District Administrators

Wisconsin Association of
School Business Officials

Wisconsin Council for
Administrators of Special Services